

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 05883 092016Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9018

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SECDEF FOR JCS

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS VE

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT OF US MILITARY GROUP COMMANDER

REF: CARACAS 3638

1. VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE, MAJOR GENERAL LEAL TORRES, RECENTLY TOLD U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS THAT HE PERSONALLY FAVORS THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN ARMY OFFICER TO REPLACE COL. BUSH AS COMMANDER OF THE U.S. MILITARY GROUP. SUBSEQUENTLY, MAJOR GENERAL AUGER, CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF, STATED TO COL. BUSH THAT IF THE U.S. FORMALLY SUBMITS THE NOMINATION OF AN AIR FORCE OFFICER, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WOULD REPLY IN WRITING THAT THE GOV PREFERS THAT THE MILITARY GROUP COMMANDER POSITION BE OCCUPIED BY AN ARMY OFFICER.

2. IN VIEW OF THIS CLEAR POSITION ON THE PART OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND GENERAL AUGER, BOTH OF WHOM WILL REMAIN IN THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THIS YEAR, I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ACCEDE TO VENEZUELAN WISHES AND FILL THE MILITARY GROUP COMMANDER POSITION WITH AN ARMY COLONEL. TO DO OTHERWISE COULD JEOPARDIZE OUR CLOSE WORKING RELATIONS WITH THE VENEZUELAN ARMY, OFFEND THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AND RUN THE RISK OF A
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PAGE 02 CARACA 05883 092016Z

NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM MOD OR, AT LEAST, REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS

OF COLONEL BUSH'S REPLACEMENT.

3. INASMUCH AS COLONEL BUSH'S TOUR OF DUTY ENDS THIS SUMMER, I
WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING A NOMINATION FOR HIS REPLACEMENT AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. IF WASHINGTON CONTINUES TO FAVOR THE NOMINATION OF
AN AIR FORCE OFFICER FOR THIS POSITION OVER OUR OBJECTIONS, I HOPE
THAT THIS NOMINATION WILL BE SUBMITTED SOON, SO THAT WE CAN RESOLVE
THE MATTER WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.
SHLAUDEMAN

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